

Present: Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; John Coney; Dick Burkhart; Ray Day, Jr., Chair; Dave Elliott; John Jensen, Vice-Chair; Sandy Paul-Lyle; Holly Plackett; Anirudh Sahni; Claire Schary

Excused: Joan Sells; Mike Taylor

Staff: Diane Harper, Transit Planner; Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner

Ray Day called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Claire Schary recognition

Chair Day and TAC members thanked Claire for four years of excellent service to the Transit Advisory Committee.

Bus Shelter Information

As a follow-up to the group's marketing discussion, Diane Harper described research she is conducting on the Eastside related to system information located inside bus shelters. She said that she and other staff members have been working on ways to inform riders better about how to get around using Metro. They came up with two different maps: 1) a map, very similar to the traditional system map, showing how to get from Crossroads to selected locations and 2) a more symbolic map, using directions and symbols, letting people know the variety of destinations that can be accessed at Crossroads. Metro hosted a Saturday information table at Crossroads and solicited input from the public. The consensus from staff and public is that riders need both types of information. Staff is now working on a "compromise" map that will be tested in the Crossroads bus shelter next year. The Crossroads location was selected because it is the area with the highest number of ESL residents in King County.

In the long run, Harper would like to see this kind of information in all bus shelters. The difficulty with the vision is that each map would have to be specific to the starting location. The group suggested that perhaps technology can assist in making this vision a reality. Anirudh Sahni suggested that everyone check out the www.busmonster.com website, which is run by a volunteer who has mapped the entire Metro system.

Letter of Advice: Marketing

Members edited a letter of advice supporting an increase in Metro's marketing budget. Once completed, the letter was unanimously approved by a vote of the membership. (see attached)



Waterborne Transit Study

The group discussed the direction of a preliminary letter of advice on the Waterborne Transit Study. In discussion, the group agreed that Metro should not pursue waterborne transit until other, more urgent, transit needs are met. Holly Plackett and Dave Elliott volunteered to draft that letter for the group.

Fare Policy

De Michele asked for direction from the group regarding a fare policy discussion. Much of the discussion centered on the rising price of gasoline and the implications for major transit agencies like Metro. The group agreed that they would like to pursue this topic and de Michele said she would arrange a presentation on fare policy for the next meeting. Plackett reminded the group that they had earlier taken a position that seniors, youth and people in poverty should be sheltered from fare increases as much as possible.

Committee Business

- Day reported on the August Regional Transit Committee meeting. He and Bennett were asked to represent the TAC at the RTC's September 21st meeting to present the group's letter of advice on marketing.
- Dick Burkhardt was unanimously elected vice-chair of the TAC, and will serve as chair in January, February and March. John Jensen will serve as chair for October, November and December.

Adjournment

Day adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

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September 21, 2005

The Honorable Ron Sims
King County Executive
701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3210
Seattle, WA 98104

The Honorable Pete von Reichbauer
Chair, Regional Transit Committee
The Honorable Dwight Pelz
Chair, Transportation Committee
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Sirs:

The King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) recommends that a marketing budget be included in the FY2006 budget for Metro Transit. At our request, in a recent meeting Bob Virkelyst, Supervisor, Marketing and Service Information, described a range of recent and current activities aimed at increasing ridership without additional service hours. These limited efforts have proven to be measurably successful and it is the opinion of the TAC that effective marketing is a cost-effective way to get more people onto Metro's buses.

Metro presents the best opportunity for slowing the rate of growth of congestion in the Puget Sound area, but without an active effort to make people aware of the convenience and cost effectiveness of riding the bus, Metro can not achieve its potential. Metro is not a public utility like water or electricity – it provides a mode of transportation in competition for users with every other mode. Like any other product, the public needs to know what Metro can do for them and how it can save them money.

Metro has shown that it can create effective, focused marketing campaigns that increase ridership substantially. The cost of these efforts has been very low, especially when compared to the cost of the increased service required to get the same number of new riders. For example, a \$35,000 direct mail campaign was undertaken to increase awareness of service changes in White Center, West Seattle, and Burien. Marketing materials included free passes, 30% of which were redeemed. As a result, Metro realized an additional 288,000 rides per year on the reconfigured routes. This works out to 12 cents per additional ride, an excellent return on investment.

Marketing transit services is common practice among other local agencies, most notably Sound Transit, as well as national peers. For the last few years, Metro's marketing budget has been near zero, with campaigns primarily funded by one-time grants.

Metro has recently established a solid record of successful marketing campaigns and should be rewarded for their efforts. Statistics reported to the Federal Transit Administration indicate most transit agencies spend 1% to 5% of their budget on marketing. We therefore ask that you designate at least 3% of Metro's 2006 budget for marketing.

Sincerely,

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Ray Day, Jr., Chair
King County Transit Advisory Committee

Adopted by the TAC on September 13, 2005

cc: Regional Transit Committee Members
 King County Transportation Committee Members
 David Hopkins, Transportation Manager, King County Executive's Office
 Arthur Thornbury, Legislative Analyst, King County Council
 Harold Taniguchi, Director, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
 Laurie Brown, Deputy Director, KCDOT
 Kevin Desmond, Manager, King County Metro Transit Division
 Victor Obeso, Manager, Metro Service Development
 Karen Rosenzweig, Acting Supervisor, Metro Service Planning
 Bob Virkelyst, Supervisor, Metro Marketing and Service Information